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12 July 2026

To all Councillors, Warwick District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Dear Councillors

South Warwickshire Local Plan

You are about to issue for consultation the Regulation 19 South Warwickshire Plan.

CPRE Warwickshire believes that you should reduce the Plan period to the standard 15 years, remove the most harmful greenfield allocations, and seek additional time from government to produce a Plan that better reflects both local needs and the long-term interests of South Warwickshire.

The Plan as drafted would run to 2050, 7 years longer than it needs to. It assumes that the very high level of housebuilding that is current policy (1.5 m houses in England during the 2024-29 Parliament) will continue for five Parliaments. Applying the annual target set (2,200 a year for the Plan area) for that long means a calculated 'need' for 55,000 more houses in the two Districts. At the national household size of 2.35, this would increase South Warwickshire's population from 295,000 (2025) to 425,000 in 2050, a 44% increase in 25 years.

That is equivalent to the population of England (56.5 m in 2021) increasing to 81 m by 2050, far above official population projections. And the official (ONS) forecast (issued in 2025) show that Stratford District's population naturally falls without inward migration, and Warwick's increases only slightly. The scale of growth in the SWLP is far beyond any actual need, and allocating so much land beyond actual need will cause blight and deterioration of landscape and agriculture.

We acknowledge that the current annual housing targets are imposed, not decided locally, but the excessive Plan period is your choice. Changing it to the standard 15 years reduces the housing numbers by 15,400 (nearly 30%).

The justification given in 2024 for the Plan running until 2050 was that it enables enabling infrastructure to cover 25 years ahead to be funded and put in. But the proposed housing is largely urban extensions where infrastructure (roads, sewers, health clinics, primary schools) can be put in in 3-4 years. (The huge London Olympics site, requiring land reclamation and decontamination, took only 6 years from start to completion and handover.) Only new settlements away from existing urban areas require wholly new infrastructure that takes longer; and these are proposed only because the Plan period is so long that the housing requirement is excessive. (The proposed new settlements in the Green Belt at Hatton (HAT) and north of Henley-in-Arden (HEN1) are unnecessary if the Plan period is 15 years.)

May we ask you to resolve at the Council meetings on 14 and 15 July that, after the public consultation stage, you will reduce the Plan period to 15 years, remove the most harmful greenfield allocations, and seek additional time from government to produce a Plan that better reflects both local needs and the long-term interests of South Warwickshire?

The Plan period should be shortened to comply with the minimum national requirement. Development should be phased, prioritising the least harmful sites first and allowing future reviews to take account of changing circumstances, including any revisions to national policy. This would enable South Warwickshire to meet its obligations while protecting its environmental assets and maintaining the character of its towns and villages.

To illustrate what can be done, our Appendix shows that a number of contentious and harmful greenfield and Green Belt housing sites proposed in the Plan can be deleted if you set the Plan Period at the standard 15 years.

Yours faithfully

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Appendix: see next page >
Appendix

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND (CPRE) - WARWICKSHIRE

SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE LOCAL PLAN Regulation 19 Draft Plan

Large housing allocations that can be withdrawn from the Plan by limiting the SWLP to a 15-year Plan Period

(Plan adopted 2028; standard plan period 15 years; end date of Plan 2043 instead of 2050)

Annual housing target: Stratford District 1,112 houses/yr (from MHCLG Dec2024)
Warwick District 1,085

Total annual target 2,197 houses/yr

25 years 2025 to 2050 total 54,925

18 years 2025 to 2043 total 39,546

Reduction in housing requirement 15,379
by adopting 15-year plan period

DELETIONS - WARWICK DISTRICT

Hatton HAT -4,000

S of Kenilworth KEN1 -776

Blackdown LEA1 -1043

Milverton LEA2 -974

E of Lillington LEA3 -1455

Total -8248

DELETIONS - STRATFORD DISTRICT

N of Henley-in-Arden HEN1 -2084

E and NE of Southam SOU1 -3122

N of Wellesbourne WEL1 -1331

Bidford (partial reduction) BID1 -650

Total -7187

Total South Warwickshire Plan area **-15,435 reduction in housing numbers**

This is one option for reducing greenfield housing sites with a 15-year SWLP Plan Period (end-date 2043). Others may offer different sets of sites to delete.